

ROYAL ARMOURIES

Witness | Guardian | Expert | Leader

Knights and Castles

Learning Resource

Teacher Notes

KS1



Overview

The Royal Armouries learning resources have been created for teachers to use in the classroom or for your pupils to access from home with teacher guidance. The knights and castles learning resources pack is specifically designed to support the following National Curriculum requirements for your Key Stage 1 pupils:

- **Identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods**
- **Ability to use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms**
- **Ability to ask and answer questions**
- **Ability to understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented**

Our resources focus on knights and castles, subjects your students may already be aware of through prior informal learning .

The Royal Armouries Museum is home to many pieces of arms and armour which relate to knights and castles, making our resources a rich collection of visual tools to assist your lesson planning.

General information

Knights and castles in England

Knights and castles came to Britain with William the Conqueror and his Norman invasion. The importance of Norman knights at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 solidified their prominence both in English society and as a vital military force. Today, the monarch may still confer a knighthood on some of her subjects as a mark of honour.

11th century knights wore mail armour, made of thousands of interlocking rings. Over the centuries they started to wear more plate armour, which was better at deflecting sword blows and arrows. By the 15th century knights were completely covered in plate armour. They seemed unstoppable, until the arrival of powerful firearms, capable of puncturing plate armour, stopped them in their tracks.

William the Conqueror also built many castles over England, allowing the king to dominate the country and project his power upon his new subjects. Construction The White Tower in London, the original home of the Royal Armouries, began during William's reign.

Originally castles were built from wood, making them quicker to build but easier to destroy, either by accident or in siege. Later, stone was used, making castles stronger and visually more imposing.

Key Terminology

- **Motte and Bailey Castle** A type of castle (usually wooden) that has a keep on a raised mound, called a motte. Below this is the bailey, where people live and work
- **Keep** The inner building and stronghold of the castle
- **Palisade** A defensive wall protecting the bailey of a Motte and Bailey Castle
- **Mail** Armour made of thousands of tiny, interlocking metal rings that can be made to cover any part of the body
- **Plate armour** Solid sheets (or plates) of metal
- **Sabatons** Plate armour to protect a knight's feet
- **Gauntlets** Plate armour to protect a knight's hands
- **Sallet** A type of helmet worn by a knight in the 15th/16th century, worn with a bevor
- **Bevor** A piece of plate armour that is worn with a sallet helmet to protect the chin and act as a spit tray
- **Vambrace** Plate armour that protects the arms
- **Cuisse** Plate armour to protect the thigh
- **Greaves** Plate armour to protect the lower leg
- **Lance** Long, spear-like weapon used to charge at the enemy whilst on horseback
- **Squire** Usually over 14 years old, usually nobly born, a knight in training who would assist a knight
- **Page** Usually over 7 years old, a page would begin learning the basics of becoming a squire

The resources

Sir George Video

This video is a short and fun way to introduce the armour of a knight to your pupils. It is designed to:

1. enhance historical knowledge
2. increase ability to understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented
3. increase their ability to use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms

This resource can also be used to inspire your pupils creativity with art, design or literacy tasks.

Time Travel Radio: Knights and Castles

This fictional radio show includes interviews with a Saxon person living in a new Norman castle, followed by a Guard at Clifford's Tower (York) 250 years later. The interviews are designed to inspire pupils to imagine what it might have been like to live in wooden and stone castles. It will give your pupils:

1. historical knowledge
2. increase their ability to use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms
3. identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods.

This resource can also be used to inspire pupils with writing or drama based activities.

Photo bank

The photo bank has been compiled to assist your lessons in any way that you see fit. They are all original photographs or images of items in our collection. Please download them for educational use only. They are great for increasing historical knowledge, building evidentially supported enquiries and historical source work.

Images will be added and updated on a regular basis.

We have added notes to each image; collections items are hyperlinked in the descriptions to our Collections Online, where you can get more images and technical information; the asset numbers for our Image Library are given where relevant. If you would like any more information about any image, please contact educate.leeds@armouries.org.uk and we would be happy to assist.